



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2018

No. 107

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 26, 2018.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GLENN THOMPSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 8, 2018, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

STOP POLLUTING TREASURE COAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because it is the 24th day that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has intentionally discharged toxic water from Lake Okeechobee in Florida's interior into the Treasure Coast of Florida, which is my community.

Today, I have a group of warriors with me, the River Kidz. They are here in Washington fighting to show that

what is happening in our community is not okay. It is not right, and it is not just.

The River Kidz are a group of young people from the Treasure Coast of Florida whose health and community have been threatened. While many kids across the country right now are gearing up to go to camp this summer or spending their days on a boat or at a beach or fishing, our kids are doing all that they can to avoid contact with our water because every single day our water is being made more and more toxic.

As we speak, there is a toxic algae bloom over 100 miles in diameter laden with cyanobacteria. It is being drained into Florida's east coast, and, in fact, as we speak, satellite imagery shows that nearly half of the entire lake of Lake Okeechobee is covered in algae. It is a threat to the health of every single man, woman, and child who is exposed to it.

The toxic algae blooms are also devastating to threatened species like manatee who inhabit our waters but cannot escape from the water. The billions of gallons of discharge that is evacuated from Lake Okeechobee into the coastal estuary wipes out our entire estuary of seagrass the way a wildfire wipes out a forest, leaving no habitat for the rest of the sea life that is meant to exist there.

Mr. Speaker, you might be wondering: Why would anybody in Washington care about this beyond to say for a few moments what a sad situation it really is? Washington needs to care. Washington needs to care because this is a situation that is created by the fact that Florida's water system is functioning exactly the way that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designed the system to function.

In other words, this is happening on purpose. The Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule, which is what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers uses to decide

when and where water out of Lake Okeechobee will be discharged into places it does not belong, is designed to "share adversity."

Let me say that again. The Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule is designed to share adversity.

Shared adversity means shared toxic water into a community that did not share at all in the polluting of the source of the toxic water. Mr. Speaker, let me explain this in a way that people here in Washington, people here in the Capitol, can relate to.

It would be like if a Senator on the other half of this building flushed their toilet over there, and instead of sending that sewage into pipes that go underneath the street and into a water treatment plant, the Corps of Engineers set up a system here where they had a pipe that dumped the sewage onto the floor of the House of Representatives. That is what shared adversity by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers looks like.

In the case of my community, it is not just a pipe, though. It is millions of gallons a minute that destroys our environment, destroys our economy, destroys small businesses, and affects the health, as I said already, of every single man, woman, and child who comes in contact with the water, and it threatens our entire way of life.

The Treasure Coast of Florida can no longer be forced to share adversity that they played no role in creating. The River Kidz, myself, and the entire Treasure Coast of Florida demand that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stop immediately its willful pollution of our home that is done on behalf of others.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ELIZABETH BRACKETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5651